far higher than mere conventional rank; for if the principles of taste can be shewn to depend on natural causes, they are, of necessity, immutable and universal.

The connection of architectural and natural beauty has been made the subject of a previous paper. The pleasure inspired by the contemplation of the works of nature is a universal feeling. It is not necessary to examine into the *causes* of that feeling; all we are concerned with is the universality of its existence; for, admitting *that*, it necessarily follows that there must be a natural repugnance in the mind to architectural forms which violate the harmony and general laws of beauty observed throughout the works of nature.

This analogy between nature and art forms, it is contended, the true basis of the *science* of architecture. And it is important to observe that, if this be not the basis, no other can be assigned instead of it. If the pleasure derived from the contemplation of the works of nature do *not* produce a certain natural habit of thinking—or rather, of feeling—on all subjects of tastes,—architectural taste must be purely accidental, and its laws must therefore be incapable of systematic classification. Precedent alone will not establish for it a universal code of laws, for no one kind of architecture has, in all ages and all countries, received the admiration of mankind; and it is therefore obvious that laws, derived from usage alone, would be binding with respect only to the architectural styles of particular periods and nations. If, on the other hand, styles, otherwise the most distinct and remote from each other, can be shewn to have mutual connection, through their mediate analogy to nature, and in no other way, it becomes indisputable that nature is the only general guide on subjects of taste, and that in all disputes respecting those subjects, the last appeal must lay in her court.

Before, however, proceeding to establish this analogy, it is necessary to state one important limitation of the enquiry. Every science indicates the existence of certain fundamental principles, and investigates the inferences to which they lead: but leaves the ultimate *causes* of the principles themselves unexamined. In the science of mechanics, for example, the existence of a certain force of gravity and its influence on the motion and equilibrium of bodies is a necessary subject of inquiry; but the mechanical philosopher does not enquire *why* an unsupported body falls to the ground. He contents himself with ascertaining the fact and manner of falling, without speculating as to the nature of that secret influence which produces the phenomenon. Similarly, the effects of gravity on the motion of planets have been diligently investigated; but the mysterious chain which binds those bodies to the sun without visible means of connection, forms no part of astronomical research. In the same way, in an endeavour to establish a science of architecture, we have simply to enquire what natural principles of beauty produce universal delight without enquiring as to the abstract cause of that pleasure.

It is the more important to explain on what grounds the question—*why* the works of nature produce sensations of pleasure—is excluded, because the necessity of that exclusion has not always been observed. Many eminent writers on the principles of taste have speculated as to the causes of these sensations, and even the great author of the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, endeavoured to account for the perception of the sublime, by associating it with a vague notion of terror, or apprehension of bodily danger. Whereas it seems more reasonable—or at least, more practically useful—to assume the existence of all the faculties of taste as simple *facts*, without referring them to physical causes. Pure emotions are incapable of logical analysis. They are essential parts of our nature—inherent faculties of the mind, just as the physical senses are of the body. The palate is nauseated by things excessively acrid or bitter, and is gratified by other kinds of flavours; the sense of smell is delighted or offended by different odours; the sense of sight by different forms, and it is vain to speculate, why the perfume or colour of flowers, or the flavour of fruits, pleases certain senses. Similarly it is impossible to wholly explain why the perception of beautiful or sublime ideas, gratifies the mind: we can do little more than classify the corresponding emotions. Poetry (using the word in its widest sense) *cannot be defined*. It can only be perceived. To explain to a man utterly destitute of poetical feeling the nature of poetry, were as hopeless a task as the endeavour to explain to a blind man the visual impressions produced by colour.

These preliminary principles being laid down, we are in a position to indicate more particularly some of those analogies between nature and art from which, as it appears to us, the laws of architectural taste and criticism are to be derived. Mere outward resemblances of form constitute but a small part of these analogies. The carved or sculptured representations of foliage and other natural productions, are doubtless sources of great beauty in architecture; but if the analogy to nature were confined to these direct imitations, the instruction derived from nature would be very limited. There are, however, other means of more general comparison, which lead to principles capable of universal practical adoption. Among the general principles of natural beauty, irrespective of particular forms, are the alternation of light and shadow—symmetry—that proportion of several parts to each other, by which each sustains its office with the greatest possible efficiency—prolonged perspective—continuity and regularity of curves where grace and beauty are sought after—abrupt lines and angular transitions where sublimity and grandeur are to be attained. Another important source of natural beauty is that which has been aptly termed nature's power of scene-shifting; the diversity of scenes presented to the observer as he changes his position; the alternate glimpses and partial concealment of beautiful objects. But of all these and other sources of the beautiful and sublime in nature, our purpose requires the selection of those only which are applicable to architecture; and the degree in which they are applied, must also be restricted by a consideration of the economical purposes of the art.

The triumph of architecture consists in this application of natural principles of taste in accordance with the requirements of practical utility. Architecture would lose its supremacy if utility were sacrificed to the adoption of these principles. If the alternation of light and shadow, for example, in the external or internal form of an edifice existed in such an excessive degree as to render the building inconvenient or practically useless, the source of beauty would, by its inconsiderate application, be converted into a defect. If, for the sake of prolonged perspective (to take another instance), a hall were constructed of length so enormous that the greater part of it were either of no use, or diminished the utility of the remainder, deformity, not beauty, would be the result: hence the lengthened vista which is admirable in the picture galleries of the Louvre, would be an intolerable inconvenience in a chamber of Parliamentary debate. Again, if in his anxiety to produce a grand effect, an architect were to build a church spire so lofty and of such bold form as to be in danger of falling, he would certainly have passed that narrow Rubicon which separates the sublime from the ridiculous.

Symmetry, again, is one of those general principles of natural beauty, which is capable of frequent successful application in art. But if, for the sake of a uniform and symmetrical disposition of parts, an edifice had doors and windows where they were not required by convenience, the mistaken observance of one of the principles of nature would have defeated its own object. Again, the effects of grandeur and sublimity are often produced in nature by apparent disorder—the complexity and irregular disposition of rugged parts. It was a gorgeous classical image, which represented Ossa piled on Pelion by the fury of the gigantic assailants of the throne of Jove. The magnificent disorder of mountainous and rocky scenery may be fitly expressed, by referring it to the fray of giants, of which the cleft ravines, the toppled crags and broken peaks are, as it were, the wrecks and strewn fragments left on the battle-field when the work of devastation is done. But this sublime source of natural beauty can be but imperfectly adopted in art. A feudal fortress, with its terrace over terrace, battlement on battlement, and huge towers aspiring above all, has something of that character of wild confusion and enormous strength which renders the aspect of the Alps awful. But it is apparent that this source of natural beauty, though perhaps the very highest that can be embodied in architecture, is susceptible of only limited application.

Another very important limitation of the transference of natural principles to art is the necessity of observing the manner and occasions of their employment in the great original. Nature does not scatter her beauties indiscriminately. The regular and graceful contour, the symmetrical arrangement of parts, the gradual and soft blending of colours, the delicate pencilling of fine lines,—these graces are lavished on her smaller works,—the flower-cup, the moth's wing, and the painted sea-shell. But the charms of her greater works are quite of another sort. In these we have irregularity instead of symmetry, harsh abrupt lines instead of gracefully undulating curves, sudden and violent alternations of light and shadow instead of blended hues, strongly defined outlines instead of graceful pencilling. It needs no argument to shew that if this law were reversed in art, if the more delicate graces were wasted on the large parts, or if the sterner beauties, which naturally belong to these, were misapplied to the subordinate members, a grievous violation of true taste must be the result. A buttress, for instance, is a member of a building in which strength, and, therefore, large dimensions, are essential. It is usually required to resist great strains both vertically and horizontally; without it the building would fall; or, at least, if its removal would not endanger the safety of the building, it was false taste that placed it where it is. How absurd then to fritter away this important member into a mere decoration! This disguise of its true aspect and character is like the garlanding of the bull's horns; it is the conversion of that which was meant for strength into a mere peg for the suspension of ornaments, and it is the precursor of sacrifice.

Many other general analogies between natural and architectural beauty might be adduced; but for the present the instances cited are sufficient. All that has been necessary up to the present point of inquiry was to shew that there *are* certain relations between nature and art, and that these relations are not confined to mere specific resemblances of particular forms, but are of a much more extensive character—that they consist in those general *effects*, or pervading principles of natural beauty which are consistent with the constructive purposes of architecture.

Nothing like a discussion of the abstract principles of beauty has been attempted; because if it be true that nature *has* certain principles of beauty, inquiry respecting their causes is unnecessary. It becomes indisputable that our tastes must naturally be in accordance with those principles, and that the exceptional cases of individual tastes which are contrary to those principles are to be referred to the perversions of custom and accidental associations.

This seems quite sufficient explanation of the occasional diversity of tastes, without resorting to the conclusion that there is *no* standard of beauty. Many writers, however, have adopted this strange conclusion, either because they saw no other way to account for the caprices of fashion, or because they were led unavoidably to it by their own hypotheses of the metaphysical nature of beauty. Numerous *theories of beauty* have been proposed, and a very brief notice of one or two of them will tend to elucidate the present view of the subject. The account will, it is hoped, serve to shew that great difficulties are avoided by constituting nature the supreme arbiter respecting the principles of taste.

The speculations respecting the ultimate nature of beauty may be divided into two classes—the one referring it to physical, the other to mental causes. Of the first class, the opinions of Burke hold the principal place. In his "Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful," he, as we have already said, refers the idea of sublimity to a sense of personal apprehension; so that the grandeur of a lofty tower or steep crag is supposed by him to be created in the mind by a confused sense of the danger of falling from their summits. The idea of the beautiful he refers to the languor occasioned by a physical relaxation of the fibres. These

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